NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

SBA PLANS 'Y2K'ACTION WEEK; EVENTS WILL REACH MILLIONS ACROSS U.S.

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced plans for a week dedicated to getting small business owners to focus on the challenges posed by the computer problem linked to the Year 2000 transition, the so-called Y2K bug. 'Y2K Action Week' will be held Oct. 19 to 23. The SBA will lead several federal agencies in hosting a series of educational events across the country, all geared to minimizing Y2K disruptions.

"Early this summer, the SBA began this national education campaign with a simple message: Are You Y2K OK?" said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez**. "For many, that question still needs to be answered, and we're going to do everything we can to help."**

The agency's plan was outlined to Congress today by SBA Deputy Administrator Fred Hochberg during a hearing before the U.S. Senate's Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem.

"The SBA will reach at least 2 million small business owners during Y2K Action Week," said Deputy Administrator Hochberg. **"In our SBA district offices, we are holding in-house seminars. Others will link several sites together using a satellite feed. We're also targeting specific segments like the banking community and chambers of commerce. SBA will be on the air on talk radio shows. It's a full court press."**

<div align="center">**--more--**</div>

98-86 / Page Two

The agency's 69 district offices are planning events, as well as many of the SBA's Business Information Centers and offices associated with the agency's resource partners, the Service Corps of Retired Executives and Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). There are about 950 SBDCs located at colleges and universities around the country.

Experts are concerned that on Jan. 1, 2000, many computers will recognize 'double zero' not as 2000 but as 1900. The glitch could cause them to stop running or to start generating erroneous data.

To deal with Y2K, Deputy Administrator Hochberg urges small business owners to take three immediate steps:

- **Determine your business' Y2K risk with affected hardware, software or embedded data chips.** *A self-assessment test is available on the SBA's Internet Y2K web page. (www.sba.gov/y2k/)*

- **If you are vulnerable, take action now. Don't wait. Fix your problem and test the results. Develop contingency plans to deal with the effects of Y2K problems outside your control.**

- **Stay informed. Accurate information may change as solutions evolve.**

To keep the public informed, the SBA has instituted three ways to obtain current Y2K information. These include a Y2K Internet home page at *www.sba.gov/y2k/* and SBA's toll-free Answer Desk at **1-800-U-ASK-SBA** (1-800-827-5722). Answer Desk staff will route callers to the best sources of Y2K information. The third option is the agency's newly created fax-back system.

To use the fax-back system:

1. **Call this toll-free number: 1-877-RU-Y2K-OK (1-877-789-2565).**

2. **Make your selection from a menu.**

3. **Within minutes, you'll receive a fax targeted to your specific Y2K needs.**

SBA's Y2K Fax-Back can be used on touch-tone or rotary dial telephones and is available 24-hours-a-day.

# # #